

CHAPTER 5 FIRE MARSHAL

[Ch 5 as appeared in July 1974 IDR Supplement, rescinded June 30, 1975]
[Prior to 4/20/88, Public Safety Department [680] Ch 5]

GENERAL PROVISIONS

661—5.1(100) Description. This division's charter is to prevent fires. Fire causes are determined and communicated to the public by various means including the division's annual report. The division requires building standards necessary for fire safety and apprehends those who violate such standards or fire-related criminal statutes.

5.1(1) The division's administrator is entitled the state fire marshal. The fire marshal has one assistant. The nonclerical employees of this division are peace officers designated as special agents, fire prevention inspectors, fire prevention specialists, and designated subordinates.

5.1(2) Special agents examine a fire or a fire scene to determine its cause, and arrest any who unlawfully cause fires or violate fire-related laws.

5.1(3) Inspectors examine buildings to determine the compliance of its system with applicable laws or rules.

5.1(4) A fire prevention specialist examines blueprints and specifications of proposed buildings.

5.1(5) Variance from rules. The state fire marshal may grant variances from rules in this chapter. Variances may be granted at the discretion of the state fire marshal, upon a finding that a need for the variance has been established and that the safety standard of the rule will be achieved through equivalent technology or compensating factors.

Requests for variances shall be addressed in writing to the State Fire Marshal, Iowa Department of Public Safety, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319. Forms for this purpose may be obtained from the state fire marshal. Each application must contain the following information:

- a. The specific rule(s) from which a variance is requested.
- b. Documentation of the need for a variance. Explanation should be given of the unreasonable hardship which would be created by compliance with the rule(s) cited in 5.1(5) "a."
- c. Explanation of alternative means to achieve the safety standard of the rule(s) through use of equivalent technology or compensating factors.

The state fire marshal may request any additional information deemed relevant to a variance request. The state fire marshal shall grant or deny the requested variance within 60 days of receiving all requested information.

661—5.2(17A,80,100,101,101A) Definitions. The following definitions apply generally to the provisions of this chapter unless a specific exception is made with reference to a particular rule or sequence of rules within the chapter.

"Building" is any structure used for or intended for supporting or sheltering any use or occupancy. Each portion of a building separated by one or more area separation walls with a fire-resistive rating of at least two hours may be considered a separate building.

"Fire" includes explosions in which fire, combustion or rapid oxidation is an element but does not include explosions caused by nonflammable gases, liquids or other materials.

"Fire marshal" means the fire marshal, the assistant fire marshal, fire prevention inspectors, special agents, fire prevention specialist and designated subordinates.

"Fire marshal's office" means the headquarters of the fire marshal.

“Owner” (For service of notice, criminal sanctions and penalties.) If a building is owned by a corporation, the chairperson or president of the board of directors is considered the owner. If a building is owned by an organization governed by a board of trustees, the president or chairperson of the board is considered the owner. If a partnership is shown to be the owner of a building, any partner is considered the owner. If an individual is shown to be the owner, the individual, or the guardian or conservator of such individual is considered to be the owner. If the building is shown to be owned by a trade name, the person who registered the trade name is considered the owner.

661—5.3(17A) Building plan approval. The proposed construction of some buildings or additions, alterations or changes to existing buildings need the approval of the fire marshal and the fire marshal's approval may be obtained, if requested, on nonsingle family dwelling buildings. The procedure of this rule will apply unless inconsistent with a procedure in any of the rules which follow.

5.3(1) An initial evaluation or review by the fire marshal may be obtained on preliminary plans by submitting the plan that shows the building outline with rooms, corridors and exits indicated. The fire marshal informally responds to such preliminary plan.

5.3(2) Building plan submittals.

a. Working plans and specifications. When approval of building construction projects is required by this chapter or when requested by the submitter for other building construction projects covered by this chapter, one complete set of the final working plans and specifications shall be submitted to the fire marshal's office. The submittal shall comply with Iowa Code chapters 542B and 544A. The submittal is examined and submitter is notified of the findings. If the working plans and specifications comply with this chapter, an approval letter shall be sent to the submitter.

b. Shop drawings. Shop drawings, equipment specifications and supporting documentation for fire alarm and sprinkler systems may be submitted for review and approval. If the system is being installed as part of a project which has been designed by an engineer or architect, the submittal shall be approved by the responsible architect or engineer prior to submittal to the fire marshal. The submittal is examined and submitter is notified of the findings. If the submittal complies with the applicable standards, all copies are stamped approved and one copy is retained and the other copies, if any, are returned to the submitter. If only one copy of shop drawings, equipment specifications and supporting documentation is received, a letter shall be sent to the submitter in lieu of returning approved shop drawings.

c. Changes. No changes shall be made to the approved final working plans and specifications or shop drawings unless the changes are submitted to and approved by the fire marshal's office.

EXCEPTION: Submittal of working plans and specifications or shop drawings is not required when the plans and specifications or shop drawings have been reviewed for compliance with this chapter by the chief, or an employee authorized by the chief, of a fire department organized under Iowa Code chapter 400.

NOTE: Building, planning and design services are required to be in conformance with Iowa Code chapters 542B and 544A.

5.3(3) If the blueprints and specifications are not acceptable, the fire marshal's office specialist notifies the submitter of the deficiencies and requests that the submitter either forward changes or request a review of the blueprints and specifications with the specialist.

5.3(4) If, after such review, the submitter disputes the specialist's findings, the submitter may request that the disputed questions be referred to the national fire protection association or other similar generally recognized authority, at the submitter's expense, and the specialist submits the blueprints and specifications to the national fire protection association or other similar generally recognized authority for their analysis.

5.3(5) If the submitter disputes the findings of the national fire protection association, the submitter may appeal to the fire marshal under the procedures of 661—Chapter 10.

661—5.4(17A,100,101,101A) Inspections. Certain buildings as designated in the Iowa Code shall comply with the Iowa Code and fire safety rules. The fire marshal determines and enforces such compliance. To do so, the fire marshal may enter such building or premises at any time without notice to inspect it.

5.4(1) Such inspection may be of a particular system in the building. For example, the electrical, heating, exit, valve, piping and venting systems may be inspected. The inspection may include the entire building. For example, the building may be so dilapidated as to be especially liable to fire.

5.4(2) Such inspection is conducted by the fire marshal or by a consultant as requested by the fire marshal. A consultant would be a person with the necessary degree of training, education or experience to examine a system within a building required to be in compliance with the law or rules and determine if such system or systems is in compliance with such requirements.

5.4(3) Inspections are conducted without announcement and occur on a random basis, upon anyone's request, upon any complaint or when fire appears to be possible. For example, the presence of flammable liquids or gases or the odor thereof outside a building storing such gases or liquids may cause an inspection.

5.4(4) When the member or consultant arrives at the building that is to be inspected, the member or consultant usually advises the owner. If a person in such a position cannot be contacted, the inspection commences anyway. If the owner or representative wishes to accompany the member or consultant, they may do so, but the inspection is not delayed.

5.4(5) The member or consultant examines the system or systems being inspected to determine compliance with the laws or rules. To guide the inspection, the member or consultant uses state rules or a manual recommended by the national fire protection association or a similar acceptable fire protection agency.

5.4(6) Upon completion of an inspection, the member or consultant completes written inspection orders. The original is filed in the fire marshal's office by county; a copy is filed in the member's office in a geographical area file; and a copy is left with the fire department having jurisdiction.

5.4(7) Upon completion of the inspection, if the building does not comply with applicable laws or rules, the member or consultant identifies specifically such noncompliance and notifies the owner. The owner may be ordered to correct or repair the deficiency or may order the building removed or demolished.

a. Copies of the notice of deficiencies or order are distributed to the fire marshal's office and the fire department having jurisdiction and a copy is filed in the member's office.

b. The time to comply with the order is determined by the member considering the likelihood of fires, the possibility of personal injury or property loss, the cost, availability of materials and labor to correct, repair, remove or demolish and other reasonable, relevant information.

c. If the owner of the building does not agree with the deficiency findings and order, the owner asks the fire marshal to review the order. The provisions of 661—Chapter 10 are then used.

d. Failure to comply with an order may incur penalties.

661—5.5(100) Certificates and inspection fees.

5.5(1) *Certificates for license.* Several Iowa statutes provide that a license to conduct certain functions cannot be issued until the fire marshal has approved the building to be used for such function. Upon receipt of a written request, the fire marshal conducts or has conducted an inspection using the procedures contained in the building inspection rule 5.4(17A,100,101,101A). Upon completion of an inspection showing the building to be in compliance, the fire marshal issues a certificate. If the building is found to be in noncompliance, the certificate applicant may file a petition requesting a review and the same procedure is used as if an order were being requested to be reviewed. Upon completion of the review process, if the building is found to be in compliance, a certificate is then issued.

5.5(2) *Inspection fees.* The following fees shall apply respectively to inspections of the facilities of the types listed where a certificate of inspection from the fire marshal is required in order to obtain licensure or certification under Iowa law. The inspection fee shall be paid by check made payable to "Fire Marshal Division, Iowa Department of Public Safety" prior to the issuance of the certificate provided for in subrule 5.5(1).

a. The inspection fee for a health care facility licensed or seeking licensure pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 135C or a group home licensed or seeking licensure in this state is \$2 per bed.

b. The inspection fee for an elder group home certified or seeking certification pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 231B or an assisted living facility licensed or seeking licensure pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 231C is \$7.50 per bed.

c. The inspection fee for a child care facility licensed or seeking licensure pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 237A is \$20 per facility.

d. When an initial inspection which requires a fee pursuant to paragraphs "a," "b," or "c" of this subrule results in a finding of a deficiency or deficiencies which require a reinspection, the initial reinspection shall be performed without the imposition of any additional fee. If the original deficiency or deficiencies have not been corrected at the time of the initial reinspection, then a fee of \$100 for each additional reinspection after the initial reinspection is required until the original deficiency or deficiencies have been corrected.

e. The fee for a suitability inspection of a prospective site for a facility which may seek licensure or certification from the state of Iowa is \$100.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 100 as amended by 2000 Iowa Acts, House File 2552.

661—5.6(17A,80,100) Fire investigations.

5.6(1) The fire marshal has the authority to investigate any fire in the state of Iowa.

5.6(2) City and township officers have the primary responsibility to and shall investigate fires. The city or township officer shall file a report of each fire with the fire marshal's office within one week of the fire even if the fire marshal's division participated in, assisted with, directed or supervised the fire investigation. Upon written request, the fire marshal may grant an extension of the time for filing this report for a period not to exceed 14 days. The request shall set forth compelling reasons for such extension.

5.6(3) The city or township officer shall immediately report a fire that involves death or suspected arson and does so by contacting the member assigned to that area or, if not available, the fire marshal's office or the fire marshal or assistant or, if no such contact can be made, the officer asks the county sheriff to relay the information to the Iowa police radio or teletype system (patrol communications division). The officer's report will be recorded or logged.

- 5.6(4)** The notice of a fire involving death or arson contains the following information, if known:
- a.* If death has occurred or is suspected, the name, age and address of person or persons deceased or missing; the date, time and address of the fire; and the suspected cause of fire.
 - b.* If arson is suspected, the date, time, address of the fire; the reasons for suspecting arson; whether there is obvious evidence of arson and if there is an arson suspect.
 - c.* Whether an explosion occurred.
- 5.6(5)** If Iowa police radio has been so notified, it immediately notifies the fire marshal or the nearest available member of the fire marshal's division.
- 5.6(6)** The fire marshal may, while investigating the cause of a fire, compel witnesses and others to testify under oath and to submit books, records and other documents.
- a.* This is in the discretion of the fire marshal and may be exercised anytime, including fires that involve an extensive loss, a death, arson or explosion, or suspected arson.
 - b.* The fire marshal may allow a person to submit to a polygraph examination.
- 5.6(7)** The fire marshal notifies the person compelled to give testimony or information.
- 5.6(8)** The fire marshal may assist a local officer in the investigation of any fire. The fire marshal may superintend, direct or conduct the investigation of a fire and may request the participation of a consultant when:
- a.* Requested by state or local authority to do so.
 - b.* A death has occurred, an extensive amount of property has been destroyed, arson is suspected or an explosion has occurred.
 - c.* A person is identified as an arson suspect.
 - d.* There is obvious physical evidence of arson.
 - e.* The fire marshal deems it necessary.
- 5.6(9)** The fire marshal, when participating in the investigation of a fire, may request the person in control of the premises to execute a consent to search.